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AN

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT WATERTOWN, CT., IN THE CONGREGA-
TIONAL CHURCH, ON THE EVENING OF THE
26TH OF SEPTEMBER, 1877,

BEFORE THE

Agricultural, Horticultural and Horse Association

OF THAT TOWN.

AT THEIR FAIR HELD ON THE 25TH, 26TH AND 27TH OF
SEPTEMBER:

14 /
BY

Hon. SAMUEL A. ^{*Alfred*} FOOT, LL. D.,

OF GENEVA, N. Y.



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ADDRESS.

FELLOW TOWNSMEN:—For so the place of my birth authorises me to address you :

Your kind remembrance of me by inviting me to meet and address you on this occasion found me in the retirement and quietude of advanced years, after the completion of an active professional and judicial life. Prudence led me at first to decline your invitation, kind and honorable to me as it was, but my strong desire to visit once more the place of my nativity, meet the the very few of my contemporaries who survive, and the sons and daughters of those who have gone before me to their final rest, and the hope of saying some last words which may benefit them, have overcome all prudential considerations, and induced me to make this long journey of several hundred miles. When I look at the old farm on which I was born and see the high condition to which it has been brought by skillful cultivation, and recall the years of youthful labor which I spent almost alone on its worn-out soil, and the circumstances under which my aged parents parted with me, just after I had entered my teens, to pursue another course of life—and review my long active life, and now find myself safely here, in good health and with almost the full use of all my faculties, in the 87th year of my age, my bosom swells with a volume of gratitude to my Heavenly Father which language cannot express.

You will pardon, I hope, My Friends, these personal allusions and reminiscences. They come spontaneously from a full heart, and from it “the mouth speaketh.”

Agriculture and horticulture are broad themes, but so many learned and able men have written and spoken so fully upon them that the man is fortunate who can suggest a new practical thought on either. My purpose is not to attempt to entertain you by presenting to your imagination, in glowing language, a farm or garden as an Arcadian paradise, where the earth without

labor and culture gives forth its products in rich profusion and clothed in perpetual beauty, and where man is only to gather and enjoy the bounties of "the Giver of every good and perfect gift." Such entertainment, if entertainment it can be called, may be had at almost any time and place for the asking and paying of a scholarly, theoretical and amateur farmer and gardener. But my purpose *is*, to meet you and hold converse with you as a practical farmer and gardener. Having began life as a hard working farmer's boy, and thus learned all kinds of work on a farm even to the handling of a cradle and scythe, and now being, and having been for the last thirty years, the cultivator of a small farm and good sized garden, I hope to be able, by cutting a few leaves from my book of experience, to suggest a thought or two which may be worth remembering.

Let us first inquire and ascertain who is a good farmer and who a poor one. On such inquiry we shall find, that a fair specimen of the generality of good farmers is a man, who arranges his affairs so as to command his business, and not be driven by it—who ploughs, plants and sows at the right time—who hoes his corn and hills his potatoes when they require it—who cuts his grass when ready for the scythe, and harvests his grain when ripe—who contracts no debts which he cannot pay when due, and always has some ready money on hand, to hire labor when he wants it, and buy, at a fair bargain, anything he may happen to need—who has an industrious, careful wife, to make the most of what he provides, and give him a clean, orderly, comfortable house to enter, when he comes in from the field.

On the other hand we shall find that a poor farmer is a shiftless man, who is always behindhand with his work, and never has the satisfaction of doing anything rightly and at the right time—who neglects his fences, and, consequently, is often annoyed, when he goes out in the morning, by seeing his own or his neighbor's horses and cattle in the fields where his crops are—who is always in debt and worried by duns, and who, in short, is always "under the weather," and driven by his business—and who is so unfortunate as to have an idle, careless and slovenly wife—who lets the milk sour because the pans are not properly washed and aired—and the butter become rancid, because not thoroughly worked—who neither keeps herself nor her children

tidy, and wastes, instead of taking care of and making the most of what her husband brings into the house.

The first and the valuable thought which the contrast of these two characters suggests, and the impressive lesson which it teaches the young farmer is, to follow the example and imitate the excellencies of the first, and avoid the example and imperfections of the last. If a farmer will faithfully and perseveringly do that, his thrift and success are certain.

Few farmers are able to do all their own work, and nearly all of them are obliged to hire more or less labor. I hire two men, one by the year, who lives in my family as a domestic, and the other for eight months from the first of April to the first of December. He finds himself and lives in my neighborhood. Mainly to avoid all collisions with these men in regard to their duties, and prevent them from leaving me when their services are needed, I enter into a written contract with each of them, specifying in general terms his duties, and concluding with a clause that he shall cheerfully comply with all my reasonable requests, and on the fulfillment of the contract on his part I agree to pay him an amount of money agreed on, as follows: a specified sum at the end of each month, which is about two-thirds of what he earned that month, and the residue at the end of his term of service. I have found this operate advantageously to both parties in three ways:—

FIRST. After the first month a sum accumulates in my hands to which the employee is only entitled on serving me faithfully to the end of his term. This secures his continued and faithful service till then.

SECOND. If any question arises as to his duties, instead of a discussion or wrangle with him, I refer him to his contract to settle the matter.

THIRD. If my employee is inclined to be wasteful or extravagant with his money and lay up nothing, this arrangement prevents him from wasting one-third of his wages, and gives him at the end of his term of service a considerable sum of money which he may be inclined to save and lay up.

This method has saved me from having any flare-up with any of my men for thirty years, and given me the satisfaction of seeing all, but one of them, become thrifty and respectable men in

their positions of life. Several of them have become wealthy farmers. One of my eight-months men served me twenty years—is still my neighbor—is a respectable man and in comfortable circumstances.

This method of hiring my men is one of the leaves which I proposed to cut from my book. I will now cut another.

I act as a savings bank for all in my employ—receive deposits from them of one dollar and upwards—pay them interest at the rate of 6 per cent. per annum—settle their accounts at the end of the year and add the interest to the principal until the total reaches \$500. Then I require them to take and invest it and aid them in doing so. I do this only as long as they remain in my service. When they leave it, I require them to take their money.

A volume would be required to state in full the advantages to employers and employees of such arrangements, and the occasion will only permit me to say in a few words, that it secures to employers the continued services of faithful, saving, thrifty domestics, and gives to them contentment and self respect, and makes them kind, attentive and anxious to please. It is doubtless considerable trouble to keep their accounts, when there are several employees in a family; but the peace, order, comfort and enjoyment of our homes depend so much on their fidelity and qualifications, that an employer is repaid four-fold for the trouble of keeping the accounts of their savings.

Books have been written, and one very good one which I read a few years since, on the relations and mutual duties and obligations of employers and employees, and in which numerous rules are given for the government of each. I will draw your attention to only one of them, but that one I regard and have found in practice a golden one, though difficult to follow. It is, never censure an employee for an omission of duty while irritated by that omission. Wait till the irritation has subsided.

Knowledge is power, whether possessed by the chief magistrate of our nation or by our humblest day laborer, and especially is it valuable to the farmer and gardener. That every man and woman in every position and calling of life is the better for having an education, all will admit. This is not a proper occasion to dilate upon the value and advantages of a thorough education or discuss the best methods of obtaining it. It is, however,

a suitable occasion to consider the values and discuss the best methods of obtaining a knowledge of farming and gardening, or in more classic phrase, of agriculture and horticulture.

The value of such knowledge cannot be measured, for it surpasses all limits ; nor can it be estimated, for it is beyond all price. It is to know the sources and elements of wealth in every age and every land—to know that the broadest, strongest and most enduring basis of our power and prosperity as a nation, and of our individual wealth is the soil. Our greatest possession and profit are and ever will be the productions of the earth, and they are obtained only by human toil. They are and ever must be the sole foundation of commerce and manufactures. How deficient, therefore, must be the education of every American youth who is not taught the nature and value of the products of the earth, and the extent and character of the labor required to obtain them !

No attention has been given in any of our prominent seminaries of learning, or method adopted to instruct our youth in this branch of knowledge till within the past few years, and since our General Government made a grant to the States of public lands for educational objects, and designated agriculture as one of them. This has brought into existence some institutions whose main object is instruction in agriculture, and has created departments in others for the same object. I have not seen the course of instruction in either, nor had the opportunity of judging of its method or efficiency. I have, however, a pretty clear idea of what it ought to be, and to show you what that idea is, I will cut another, and the last leaf to-day, from my book.

I had eight sons who grew up to man's estate, the youngest of whom reached manhood several years before the grant of lands by the General Government to the States already mentioned. To each of these sons I gave a liberal education, as I have always deemed it the duty of every father to give his son as good an education as his means will allow, and his son is willing to receive, whatever may be his future calling. After each of my sons was fitted for college, I required him to work one year on my farm and in my garden, for which I paid him fair and regular wages, as "reward sweetens labor," and required him to keep and work regular hours like my hired men. This gave him a knowledge of the products of the farm and garden, and

the use of implements used in both, but what I regarded of more value, showed him what labor was and the toil required to enable "man to live by the sweat of his brow." The knowledge thus acquired has proved of service to my sons as they have settled in life, and any agricultural education which comes short of this is in my opinion defective.

You probably have noticed that thus far I have spoken only of the education of sons, without mentioning that of daughters. This is not because I regard their education of less importance than that of sons. In educating my daughters, (for I have daughters as well as sons), no pains or expense has been spared to give to them as good and suitable educations as to my sons. But because, in my judgment, the education of our daughters should mainly be directed by and committed to mothers and right-minded women qualified to instruct them—not to the Julia Ward Howes and Susan B. Anthony's of the present day, who are dissatisfied with the arrangements of a beneficent Creator, and strive presumptuously and foolishly to improve them, but to such women as Montgomery describes as ornaments and blessings of Anglo-Saxon homes, when he says :

"Here Woman reigns; the mother, daughter, wife;
Strews with fresh flowers the narrow way of life;
In the clear heaven of whose delightful eye
An angel-guard of loves and graces lie;
Around whose knees domestic duties meet,
And fireside pleasures gambol at her feet."

That is the kind of woman which God made as a companion of man. To such women should be committed the education of our daughters, and from them they would learn their true duties and true position in life.

While I think that the education of the young women of our country should be mainly directed and given by their own sex, yet I will venture to make a single remark on that subject. No lady, however highly educated or accomplished, is less a lady for working, salting and laying down in a crock a churning of butter, or cooking and preparing a meal for her husband and children.

I will now direct your attention for a few minutes to the subject of gardening. I do not expect that my few remarks on that subject will interest or even arrest the attention of those of my audience who, by their inventive talents or otherwise, have ac-

quired large fortunes, and employ gardeners on salaries of from three to five hundred a year, and do not know, so far as a practical knowledge of horticulture is concerned, whether the vegetables on their tables come from the earth or the skies. But my remarks may perhaps be of some service to those of my audience who, like myself, plant or help plant their gardens, and use, at least to some extent, the spade, hoe and weeding hook.

Twenty-two years ago on the 28th day of this very month, I delivered an agricultural address in one of the large counties of the State of New York, in the open air, and to a very large assembly of farmers, said to have been over 3,000 in number. One topic of that address was a garden, and my object was to show and convince farmers, who in the State of New York could scarcely be said to have a garden, of the value and advantage of one in supplying a family with food. To show this, I stated among other facts, that an asparagus bed, 40 feet long and 30 wide, would give more food every spring, and go farther to support a family, than a barrel of pork; while the cost of making it in the first instance would not exceed that of raising and fattening the pork; and the labor required in the fall, to prepare it for winter, and in the spring, to prepare it for production, would not exceed the value of twenty pounds of pork; and the bed, when rightly made, if properly taken care of, would last a life-time.

This statement seemed to surprise my hearers. I now repeat it, and no doubt it surprises you, and you can scarcely credit it. Your minds are probably in the same frame as that of one of my hearers on the former occasion. A friend of mine met him the day after the address was delivered, and the following conversation between them occurred:

My F. Did you hear the address of my friend Foot yesterday?

Far. Yes.

My F. Well, what did you think of it?

Far. First rate. He said a great many very good things.

My F. But what did you think of what he said about the asparagus bed and the barrel of pork?

Far. Wall—wall, (speaking slowly and hesitatingly, fearing to speak out his mind fully lest he might give offence, and yet too honest to conceal the truth,) wall, your friend is a pretty considerable smart sort of a man to talk, but I guess, if I had

my choice, I'd take the barrel of pork afore the sparrow-grass.

Yet I know the statement is true. For my asparagus bed is of the size mentioned, and I know what it yields yearly, and many barrels of pork of my own raising have been consumed in my family, and I know how far a barrel goes in providing food for a household, as well as how far asparagus goes for the same object. I know, too, what it cost to make the asparagus bed in the beginning, and what it has cost yearly to keep it in good condition. It is now thirty years old, and last season yielded one quarter more than my family could use, though it consisted with my guests of twelve. A garden 150 feet long and 100 feet wide, which is the size of mine, will produce more wholesome food than can be obtained from ten acres of land well cultivated and planted or sowed with any of the cereal grains, as wheat, rye, corn, &c. A garden of the size mentioned, will supply a family of twenty with all the vegetables they can consume, and with a small portion of meat, feed them comfortably. Vegetables, also, are more wholesome than meats. Every farmer makes a great mistake, in point of profit, who fails to have a good garden; and if he looks to comfort, health, and enjoyment, he will certainly have one; for a house in the country without a garden is indeed forlorn.

You call your association, as I see from your program, the "Agricultural, Horticultural and Horse Association." The objects of your association thus appear to be three—Agriculture, Horticulture, and the Horse. The two first have already been considered; the third one, the Horse, only remains for consideration. I regret that my knowledge of Watertown horses is so exceedingly limited as it is. It only extends to an acquaintance with one animal—an old black mare which my father owned for thirty years, twenty of the last years of the last century and ten of the first years of the present century. She was strong, square built, sure-footed, and a smart trotter. She carried, without stumbling or starting, my father and mother and two of their children to and from church every Sunday for full eighteen years, and until their youngest child, who was myself, was old enough to go to church on foot—father riding on a saddle with a child before him, and mother on a pillion behind him with a child in her lap; and after that she carried them to and from church till the infirmities of age prevented them from going.

There were no wagons or carriages for the conveyance of persons in this town till several years after the commencement of the present century. My present recollection is, that there was not one in the town when I left it, November, 1805.

My brother Ebenezer, a well developed, good-looking young farmer, full six feet high, rode this mare as a trooper in a company of cavalry for several years during the last decade of the last century, and when on her back in his uniform, horse and rider were the admiration of all beholders. I never knew the good and sure creature to start but once, and that occurred in this wise. The little folks of this town had a ball the year I was twelve years old, and the custom was for each boy to carry the girl designated for him to and from the ball, which was held in the old red tavern, which stood on the site of the present residence of Mr. Homer Hemingway. We assembled and began dancing at two o'clock P. M., and were expected to be home at early candle lighting. The girl I was to carry was a bright, pretty little girl named Sena Dayton, born the same week I was, whose parents lived at the north end of Shad street. I went after her on the old black mare in good time, her mother helped me put on the pillion, and with my girl behind me with her right arm around my person, to keep herself safely on the pillion, we went happily to the ball and returned as happily, it being understood both by ourselves and the neighbors that she was to be my wife when we reached a suitable age for marriage. After safely depositing my girl with her parents, I took the cross road from the north end of Shad street over to the Linkfield road and so home. By this time it had become dark, and as I came along by the east meadow of my father's farm with woods on my right hand, just at the foot of the hill near the northwest corner of the meadow, the good old mare and I, having each about the same knowledge of phosphorescence, saw something white lying by the side of the road about the length and size of a man's body, which I in my fright took to be a corpse in a winding sheet, and the old mare thought it was something as bad as that if not worse, was dreadfully frightened, made a sudden start which almost threw me off and ran furiously home. My mother met me at the door, and I told her what an awful object the old mare and I had seen and how frightened we were. My mother laughed at me, told me what it was, and called me a pretty one to accom-

pany girls to a ball and come home frightened out of my wits by a rotten log; and next day went with me and showed me the phosphorescent log.

My father died in 1809, and the next year on the settlement of the estate and division of his property, the good 'old mare was sold to a man in Linkfield whose business was peddling oysters. Although several years past thirty years of age, she would take him in a one horse wagon to New Haven in the fore part of the day and return with him in the after part of it with a load of oysters; and she may still be doing that for ought I know, for I have never heard of her death.

This is all the information I can give you about Watertown horses, and you are quite welcome to it, but you will not expect me to attempt to enlarge on this object of your association.

With this my duty of to-day would be ended, did not the occasion appear to call, as it does, for a few general and parting words.

Having been born in the first year of the last decade of the last century, 1790, I have lived through a most interesting period of the history of our country and the world. Oh, my friends, what changes have occurred! Our country then consisted of thirteen states, lying along the Atlantic coast and east of the Alleghany Mountains, with three millions of people. Now we are thirty-eight states with forty-five millions of people, extending from ocean to ocean and from the lakes to the Gulf of Mexico.

I saw, in 1806, the first steamboat that ever moved on the waters of the Hudson river, or any distance on any waters. It came up that river from Clearmont, Dutchess county, where Livingston and Fulton built it, to Albany. I was then living with my brother Ebenezer, an office boy in his office in Troy. He had by that time become a prominent and successful lawyer. It was known in Troy that the steamboat was to come up to Albany on a certain day, and every body that could move went down to Albany to see it. Those rode who could and others walked. I and another boy went on foot; it was only six miles. I stood on the dock at Albany and saw the great black thing, which looked like a monstrous mud turtle, come slowly up the river at the rate of four miles an hour and haul up to the dock. Now

steam moves every thing on land or water upon the face of the earth.

In the year 1812 I was sitting at the tea table of my brother Ebenezer in Albany, who had then become an eminent lawyer and moved from Troy to Albany, the capital of the State, and I was a clerk in his office, and heard my brother and Solomon Southwick, a friend of his, converse on various subjects. Mr. Southwick was the editor of a newspaper published in Albany, a man of real genius and remarkable talents, but very visionary. There was a lull in the conversation for a short time; Mr Southwick broke the silence by saying:

“Foot, the time will come, though you and I won’t see it, when there will be a railroad from Boston to the Pacific Ocean.”

My brother replied:

“Why, Southwick, if you don’t put a guard on that tongue of yours, we shall have to put you in a lunatic asylum.”

This was the first time I ever heard the word “railroad” spoken, and hardly knew what it meant. How truly prophetic were the words of Mr. Southwick!

During the period of my life the telegraph has been invented and put in practice, the art of photography discovered, the sewing machine invented, which should never be forgotten by any one connected with this town*—the printing press so perfected as to become almost a living thing. A volume could be filled with the mere names of the inventions and discoveries which have been made in my lifetime. But I must stop here and not exhaust your patience; yet let me speak a few parting words.

But before speaking these words, allow me to state that I do not intend ever to deliver another public address; this is consequently my last one, and it gives me unspeakable gratification, for which I am grateful, to deliver my last public address in the church of which my parents were members and in which I was baptised.

The very soil of this town is dear to me. I was born upon it—spent my youth laboring on it—the ashes of my grand parents, of my father, of many relatives near and dear to me, are mingled with it. All my recollections of this town and its inhabitants are pleasant. Nothing has ever occurred to mar any of them. A few years ago you remembered and honored me by

*Wheeler and Wilson were residents of Watertown.

inviting me to meet and address you on the dedication of your beautiful cemetery. I accepted the invitation, met and addressed you. Our meeting was most happy. Whenever I have visited you I have been received and treated with attention, kindness and respect; these feelings are reciprocated by me. I regard you with the greatest kindness, and hold you in the highest respect; every thing which concerns your prosperity and happiness deeply interests me. Our meeting on this occasion has been pleasant to me and I hope it has been to you. But it is our last meeting in this world. I cannot hope ever to be here again. A very few years at farthest will bring me to my final rest, and death will end a life already unusually and mercifully extended. But it is not "all of death to die." Death only separates the two elements, body and spirit, which constitute our being; while the body perishes the spirit survives, is immortal and never dies. When the body returns to dust the spirit ascends to our Heavenly Father from whom it emanated, and there, if life here has been what it ought to be, with expanded powers knows as we are known, comprehends the mystery of the being of our God, His works and providences—meets our dear Redeemer face to face, joins and communes with saints redeemed, meets many who have been near and dear on earth, and enters with them the mansions of rest "our Saviour has gone before to prepare for those who love Him." Oh! what a day, what a glorious day will that be, My Dear Friends and Fellow Townsmen, when we, spiritual beings as we shall be, will begin this spiritual life, enter those mansions of rest, and meet in them to part no more. In the hope and belief we shall so meet, I bid you an affectionate and heartfelt farewell.

SAMUEL A. FOOT.



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